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CIA records reveal Magrath attended classified briefing

By Jeff Goldberg
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University President C. Peter Magrath met secretly with top CIA officials in June 1978 in an apparent attempt to enlist Magrath's aid in improving relations between the agency and the academic community, the Daily has learned.

Magrath said he attended a day of briefings, including discussions with then-CIA Director Admiral Stansfield Turner and other high-ranking officers, primarily out of "curiosity," and that he has largely forgotten what they talked about.

Magrath was one of seven presidents from large, research-oriented universities to receive such briefings in March and June 1978 at CIA headquarters in Langley, Va. Magrath was the only president accepting an invitation to Langley who asked that his participation remain a secret. Many university presidents refused to attend the briefings.

The briefings were part of a public relations effort, carried out while Turner was head of the agency. These briefings were designed to protect the agency's ability to recruit foreign and American students as agents, conduct classified research, and brief and de-brief scholars going to and coming back from Eastern bloc nations.

New Times magazine, which has been critical of domestic CIA operations, said in 1979 that the seminars were intended to "woo leading university administrators. . . . This latest goodwill effort comes in the wake of a flood of requests from some 80 universities for agency files concerning clandestine recruitment of students

and faculty by CIA operatives. Agency Director Admiral Stansfield Turner has openly refused to give any assurance that he will comply with strict guidelines proposed by Harvard University President Derek Bok to limit the agency's campus activities."

Magrath's participation in the classified briefings was revealed when the Center for National Security Studies (CNSS), an intelligence community watchdog founded by the American Civil Liberties Union, sued the CIA under the federal Freedom of Information Act to obtain all previously

classified documents related to the briefings.

The Daily obtained copies of the documents from CNSS.

Covert recruiting of students, especially foreign students, "is happening right now . . . it is always happening," according to Jay Peterzell, a CNSS spokesman. "That's probably the most important thing the agency does here."



C. Peter Magrath

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